

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information processing apparatus  
comprising:

5 encryption means, for encrypting a life counter  
for content data;

addition means, for adding said encrypted life  
counter to a content data file; and

10 transmission means, for externally transmitting,  
via a network, said content data file having said added  
life counter.

15 2. An information processing apparatus according  
to claim 1, wherein said transmission means externally  
transmits said content data file via the Internet.

3. An information processing apparatus  
comprising:

20 reception means, for externally receiving, via a  
network, a content data file to which an encrypted life  
counter has been added;

processing means, for processing said content data  
file;

25 subtraction means, for subtracting a specific  
value from said encrypted life counter; and

control means, for inhibiting said processing  
means from processing said content data file when the  
value held by said encrypted life counter has been

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reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

4. An information processing apparatus according  
to claim 3, wherein said reception means externally  
5 receives said content data file via the Internet.

5. An information processing apparatus according  
to claim 4, wherein said processing means displays,  
prints or reproduces data in said content data file.  
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6. An information processing system whereby a  
first information processing apparatus and a second  
information processing apparatus are interconnected,  
wherein said first information apparatus comprises:  
15 encryption means, for encrypting a life counter  
for content data,  
addition means, for adding said encrypted life  
counter to a content data file, and  
transmission means, for transmitting, via a  
20 network, said content data file having said added life  
counter to said second information apparatus; and  
wherein said second information processing  
apparatus comprises:

reception means, for receiving, via a network,  
25 from said first information processing apparatus a  
content data file to which an encrypted life counter  
has been added,

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processing means, for processing said content data file,

subtraction means, for subtracting a specific value from said encrypted life counter, and

5 control means, for inhibiting said processing means from processing said content data file when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a number smaller than said specific value.

10 7. An information processing system according to claim 6, wherein said transmission means or said reception means externally transmits or receives said content data file via the Internet.

15 8. An information processing system according to claim 7, wherein said processing means displays, prints or reproduces data in said content data file.

20 9. An information processing system according to claim 8, wherein said second information processing apparatus further comprises:

copying means, for copying said content data file including said encrypted life counter; and

25 counter control means, for reducing, to half a value, the value held by life counters of a source file that is copied and a destination file when copying said content data file.



comprising:

data transmission means, for externally transmitting, via a network, a content data file;

5 life counter transmission means, for externally transmitting, via said network, a life counter for said content data file; and

program transmission means, for externally transmitting, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file.

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14. An information processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein said data transmission means, said life counter transmission means and said program transmission means externally transmit said content data file via the Internet.

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15. An information processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein said application program file is used to display, print or reproduce data in said content data file.

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16. An information processing apparatus comprising:

25 data reception means, for receiving, via a network, a content data file;

life counter reception means, for receiving, via said network, a life counter for said content data

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file;

program reception means, for receiving, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file;

5 encryption means, for encrypting said life counter;

addition means, for adding said encrypted life counter to said content data file;

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10 transmission means, for transmitting, via said network, said application program file to a different information processing apparatus; and

control means, for permitting the reading only of the content data file for an application program that is currently being executed by said different  
15 information processing apparatus.

17. An information processing apparatus according to claim 16, wherein said data reception means, said life counter reception means and said program reception  
20 means externally receive said content data file via the Internet.

18. An information processing apparatus according to claim 17, wherein said application program file is  
25 used to display, print or reproduce data in said content data file.

19. An information processing apparatus comprising:

reception means, for receiving, via a network, an application program file for processing content data from a different information processing apparatus;

processing means, for executing, via said network, said application program for processing content data stored in said different information processing apparatus;

subtraction means, for subtracting, via said network, a specific value from a life counter for said content data stored in said different information processing apparatus each time said content data file is processed; and

control means, for inhibiting said processing means from processing content data when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

20. An information processing apparatus according to claim 19, wherein, via said network, said processing means displays, prints or reproduces data in said content data file.

21. An information processing system whereby a first information processing apparatus, a second information processing apparatus and a third

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information processing apparatus are interconnected,  
wherein said first information processing apparatus  
comprises:

5 data transmission means, for transmitting, via a  
network, a content data file to said second information  
processing apparatus,

10 life counter transmission means, for transmitting,  
via said network, a life counter for said content data  
file to said second information processing apparatus,  
and

program transmission means, for transmitting, via  
said network, an application program file for  
processing said content data file to said second  
information processing apparatus;

15 wherein said second information processing  
apparatus comprises:

data reception means, for receiving, via said  
network, said content data file from said first  
information apparatus,

20 life counter reception means, for receiving, via  
said network, a life counter for said content data file  
from said first information processing apparatus,

program reception means, for receiving, via said  
network, an application program file for processing  
25 said content data file from said first information  
processing apparatus,

encryption means, for encrypting said life

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addition means, for adding said encrypted life counter to said content data file,

control means for permitting the reading of the content data file only for an application program that is currently being executed by said third information processing apparatus; and

reception means, for receiving, via said network,  
an application program file for processing content data  
received from said second information processing  
apparatus,

subtraction means, for subtracting, via said network, a specific value from a life counter for said content data stored in said different information processing apparatus each time said content data file is processed, and

25 control means, for inhibiting said processing  
means from processing content data when the value held  
by said encrypted life counter has been reduced a value

smaller than said specific value.

22. An information processing system according to claim 21, wherein said data transmission means, said  
5 life counter transmission means and said program transmission means, or said data reception means, said life counter reception means and said program reception means externally transmit or receive said content data file via the Internet.

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23. An information processing system according to claim 22, wherein said processing means displays, prints or reproduces data in said content data file.

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24. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said processing means inhibits the copying of said content data having said encrypted life counter stored in said second information processing apparatus, even if said application program is

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executed.

25. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said processing means inhibits the moving of said content data having said encrypted life  
25 counter stored in said second information processing apparatus, even if said application program is executed.

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26. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said first information processing apparatus further comprises:

5 determination means, for determining the value to be held by said life counter in correlation with the frequency of the display, printing or reproduction of said content data.

10 27. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said first information processing apparatus further comprises:

15 determination means, for determining the value to be held by said life counter in correlation with a content data reproduction time, and wherein said subtraction means decrements the value held by said encrypted life counter by a value correlated with a period of time during which said content data is reproduced.

20 28. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said second information processing apparatus further comprises:

printing means, for printing content data on a sheet.

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29. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said data reception means of said

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second information processing apparatus receives a content data file via the Internet, encrypts said content data file, and stores the encrypted content data file; and wherein said processing means of said  
5 third information processing apparatus decrypts said encrypted content data file, and displays, prints or reproduces the decrypted content data file.

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10 30. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said second information processing apparatus is a peripheral device having an Internet connection function.

15 31. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said second information processing apparatus is a LAN server having an Internet connection function.

20 32. An information processing system according to claim 23, wherein said second information processing apparatus is a network connection device having an Internet connection function.

25 33. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

- (a) encrypting a life counter for content data;
- (b) adding said encrypted life counter to a

content data file; and

(c) for externally transmitting, via a network, said content data file having said added life counter.

5           34. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

(a) externally receiving, via a network, a content data file to which an encrypted life counter has been added;

10           (b) processing said content data file;

(c) subtracting a specific value from said encrypted life counter; and

15           (d) inhibiting said step (b) for processing said content data file when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

35. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

20           (a) externally transmitting, via a network, a content data file;

(b) externally transmitting, via said network, a life counter for said content data file; and

25           (c) externally transmitting, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file.

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(a) receiving, via a network, a content data file;

(c) receiving, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file;

(f) transmitting, via said network, said application program file to a different information processing apparatus; and

37. An information processing method comprising  
the steps of:

25           (b)   executing, via said network, said application  
program for processing content data stored in said  
different information processing apparatus;

(c) subtracting, via said network, a specific value from a life counter for said content data stored in said different information processing apparatus each time said content data file is processed; and

- 5           (d) inhibiting said step (b) for processing content data when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

10           38. A computer-readable storage medium on which a program is stored that permits a computer to perform:

- (a) a process for encrypting a life counter for content data;
- (b) a process for adding said encrypted life
- 15           counter to a content data file; and
- (c) a process for externally transmitting, via a network, said content data file having said added life counter.

20           39. A computer-readable storage medium on which a program is stored that permits a computer to perform:

- (a) a process for externally receiving, via a network, a content data file to which an encrypted life counter has been added;
- 25           (b) a process for processing said content data file;
- (c) a process subtracting a specific value from

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said encrypted life counter; and

- (d) a process for inhibiting said step (b) for processing said content data file when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

40. A computer-readable storage medium on which a program is stored that permits a computer to perform:

- (a) a process for externally transmitting, via a network, a content data file;
- (b) a process for externally transmitting, via said network, a life counter for said content data file; and
- (c) a process for externally transmitting, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file.

41. A computer-readable storage medium on which a program is stored that permits a computer to perform:

- (a) a process for receiving, via a network, a content data file;
- (b) a process for receiving, via said network, a life counter for said content data file;
- (c) a process for receiving, via said network, an application program file for processing said content data file;
- (d) a process for encrypting said life counter;



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(d) a process for inhibiting said step (b) for processing content data when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value

smaller than said specific value.

43. An information processing apparatus comprising:

- 5 encryption means, for encrypting a life counter for content data; and
- addition means, for adding said encrypted life counter to a content data file.

10 44. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

- encrypting a life counter for content data; and
- adding said encrypted life counter to a content data file.

15 45. A storage medium which stored a program, said program comprising the steps of:

- encrypting a life counter for content data; and
- adding said encrypted life counter to a content data file.

46. An information processing apparatus comprising:

- input means, for externally inputting a content data file to which an encrypted life counter has been added;
- 25 processing means, for processing said content data

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file;

subtraction means, for subtracting a specific value from said encrypted life counter each time said content data file is processed; and

5 control means, for inhibiting said processing means from processing said content data file when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

10 47. An information processing method comprising the steps of:

externally inputting a content data file to which an encrypted life counter has been added;

processing said content data file;

15 subtracting a specific value from said encrypted life counter each time said content data file is processed; and

20 inhibiting said processing means from processing said content data file when the value held by said encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value smaller than said specific value.

48. A storage medium which stored a program, said program comprising the steps of:

25 externally inputting a content data file to which an encrypted life counter has been added;

processing said content data file;

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subtracting a specific value from said encrypted  
life counter each time said content data file is  
processed; and

- 5       inhibiting said processing means from processing  
said content data file when the value held by said  
encrypted life counter has been reduced to a value  
smaller than said specific value.

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